Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for analyzing body fluids, characterized in that an image recording device is used to produce at least one image of ~~the~~ a body fluid located in a container that is analyzed by means of image processing software, wherein in order to detect solid particles in the serum and/or plasma, the region corresponding to the serum is compared with stored color values or reference samples and classified as "clear" or "not clear."

2. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that firstly the type and size of the container are determined automatically.

3. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that an image of the container is produced with the aid of the image recording device, and is compared with the aid of evaluation software with stored image files and/or dimensions of known containers.

4. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 3, characterized in that ~~the~~ caps of the tubes holding the body fluid are compared, and the type of tube and height of tube are determined thereby.

5. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that after determination of the type and size of the container the ~~latter~~ container is moved automatically in such a way that as complete an image as possible of the body fluid can be produced by means of the image recording device.

6. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the container is moved automatically such that as complete an image as possible of the body fluid can be produced.

7. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 6, characterized in that a scanner and/or image evaluation software are provided for detecting an inscription placed on the container, a label and/or a cover, and in that the scanner detects ~~the~~ a bar code and the image evaluation software detects the edges of the cover, and the container is moved automatically such that the cover is situated on the side of the container averted from the image recording device.

8. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that following ~~the~~ an optical blanking out of a cover the container is covered on the side averted from the image recording device.

9. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that 15 to 50%, preferably 20 to 25%, of the outer surface of the container is covered.

10. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the image recording device is used to produce simultaneously an image of the body fluid in a first container and an image of a subsequent second container for the purpose of determining the type and size of the second container.

11. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that a color image of the body fluid and of the container is produced.

12. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that the color image of the body fluid and/or of the container are/is converted automatically into a gray value image.

13. (Original) The method as claimed in one of claims 11 or 12, characterized in that for the purpose of detecting the type and size of the container, a number of vertical lines are laid in the image of the container, the color values and/or brightness values of the pixels lying on these lines are detected, and changes in color value and/or brightness value are determined and compared with the data of known containers.

14. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 13, characterized in that ~~the~~ a handling apparatus is controlled with the aid of the data determined for the container.

15. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that one or more detail images are produced that are combined by means of the image processing software to

form an overall image.

16. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that for the purpose of evaluating the image of the body fluid, a number of perpendicular and/or horizontal lines are laid in the image of the body fluid, the color values and/or brightness values of the pixels lying on these lines are detected, changes in color value and/or brightness value are determined, and the background region and/or upper edge of the body fluid are determined.

17. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 16, characterized in that the background region is removed from the image computationally.

18. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that in order to identify ~~the~~ separating means and/or ~~the~~ a blood clot in a centrifuged sample of body fluid, each pixel row of the image is scanned from bottom to top, and the transition from dark color or brightness values to brighter color or brightness values is detected and defined as phase boundary between blood clot and ~~a~~ the separating means or between the separating means and serum.

19. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 18, characterized in that the image region determined for the separating means and/or the blood clot is removed from the image computationally.

20. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that in order

to identify blood serum/plasma and/or separating means and/or blood clot by means of ~~the~~ a region-grow method, regions of pixels with similar color values are determined, and the resulting regions are defined as serum, separating means and/or blood clot.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim ~~21~~ 1, characterized in that in order to identify solid particles in the serum and/or plasma, the region corresponding to the serum is compared with stored color values of defined solid particles in reference samples, and classified in terms of shapes or colors~~, for example "red clots" and "white clots"~~.

23. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 20, characterized in that the blood clot and/or the separating means are/is removed from the image computationally.

24. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 20 ~~or 21~~, characterized in that in order to determine the volume of the blood serum, upper and lower limits of the serum region are determined automatically, and the volume is calculated automatically with the aid of the diameter of the container.

25. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that ~~the~~ a color value is determined for each pixel for the purpose of color analysis of ~~the~~ a serum, is compared with stored color values of classified reference samples, and is classified as "good" or

"not good".

26. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that ~~the~~ a comparison is undertaken in a color space, preferably in a "CIE Lab" space.

27. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 24, characterized in that the serum is classified overall as "good" when the majority of the pixels are classified as "good", and in that the serum is classified overall as "not good" when the majority of the pixels are classified as "not good".

28. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in ~~one of claims~~ claim ~~21 to 23 or 25 to 27~~ 1, characterized in that the handling apparatus is controlled with the aid of the classification determined for the serum such that "good" and/or "clear" samples are passed for further analysis, and "not good" and/or "not clear" samples are rejected.

29. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that images of known samples are produced, classified into classes and stored in data file/files in order to produce reference data.

30. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 29, characterized in that color features are extracted at least once for all the images of the individual classes.

31. (Previously presented) An apparatus for analyzing body fluids, characterized in that an image recording device is provided and is connected to an electronic image evaluation apparatus.

32. (Previously presented) A computer programmed for carrying out the method as claimed in claim 1.

33. (Previously presented) An apparatus for analyzing body fluids, characterized in that an image recording device is provided and is connected to an electronic image evaluation apparatus, said apparatus including at least one computer as claimed in claim 32.

34. (Previously presented) A digital storage medium having electronically readable control signals that can cooperate with a programmed computer system such that a method as claimed in claim 1 is executed.

35. (Currently amended) The storage medium as claimed in claim ~~33~~ 34 that has control software for controlling an apparatus for analyzing body fluids, said apparatus being characterized in that an image recording device is provided and is connected to an electronic image evaluation apparatus.

36. (Original) The storage medium as claimed in claim 35 that has image processing software for analyzing images.

37. (Currently amended) A computer ~~program product~~ readable storage medium for carrying out the method as claimed in claim 1.

38. (Currently amended) The computer ~~program product~~ readable storage medium as claimed in claim 37, specifically control software for controlling an apparatus for analyzing body fluids, said apparatus being characterized in that an image recording device is provided and is connected to an electronic image evaluation apparatus.

39. (Currently amended) The computer ~~program product~~ readable storage medium as claimed in claim 37, specifically image processing software for analyzing images.

40. (Canceled)